

128 ⁶ THE TANALA, A HILL TRIBE OF MADAGASCAR

567 persons born into servitude, but there was no strict rule. A docile prisoner who served his master well would come to be considered a family slave, while a born slave who was lazy or troublesome would be degraded to chattel slavery. Chattel slaves simply represented so much wealth and labor power and could be sold at will. Family slaves, on the other hand, were united to their owners by ties of affection and were very rarely sold. The master could sell them, but such an act would be reprehended by the entire village. Families which had been slaves for three or four generations acquired a certain status in the village. They were permitted to own property, had their own tombs, and would only be sold if guilty of some crime. A slave family of this sort would be attached to some lineage and its economic status would differ little from that of a free family. After the Menabe came [436] under the domination of the Imerina empire, free persons were occasionally enslaved for debt, but this was always rare and the slavery was light. The individual was considered as a pledge rather than a true slave, for his lineage would make every possible effort to ransom him. A slave who had been ransomed by his relatives at once regained his social position.

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555 Good slaves were often freed by their master and would then attach themselves to his family as clients. These, their descendants, and the offspring of certain marriages between slave and free formed a class of free *afere* who were socially intermediate between the slaves and the *hova*. Individuals of this class might rise to wealth and importance in the community, but they were debarred from holding office and from burial in the village tomb.

565 During the reign of Andrianampoinerina, founder of the Imerina empire, a third class came into existence among the Menabe. The Zafakotry gens, which had been defeated by its neighbors, tendered voluntary submission to him. He helped it to conquer several of the other gentes and recognized it as the ruling gens for this division of the Tanala. All the Zafakotry then assumed the rank of *andriana*, i.e. nobles, while their chief became a king. Although [443] the assumption of *andriana* rank brought with it social prestige, most of the Zafakotry continued to live in their own gens territory and to cultivate their own land, etc. The conquered gentes recognized the authority of the Zafakotry chief, but they paid no tribute to the Zafakotry gens, nor were they displaced from their land.

The Tanala *Ikungu* were also divided into three classes, called *hova*, *subaka* and *afere*. These corresponded to the *andriana*, *hova*, and *afere* classes of the Menabe. All that has been said of

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

139

the two lower classes among the Menabe is equally applicable to the Ikongo. There were, however, two gentes of *hova* rank. One of these, the Zaframbo, claimed Arab descent, the other, called simply *hova*, apparently was an offshoot of the Bara tribe. The Zaframbo established their claim to *hova* rank as follows (MSS. of Sadaro Antoine): "After Andriamarofela [head of the original lineage] had settled at Maromanditra, on the left bank of the Manambondro River, his descendants multiplied rapidly and soon occupied almost the whole Sandrananta valley. They were excellent warriors, respected by the neighboring gentes. They always occupied Sandrananta, but at a later time, when the neighboring gentes were constantly at war with each other, some of them asked the 'hova Zaframbo' of Sandrananta to govern them and put an end to strife. The children of Rabelaza and Rabazara [heads of the Vohitrosy gens] constantly fought among themselves, wanting to be king. One of the sons of Rabelaza, called Tsiraky, went to Sandrananta to ask for a king. He was given Ramanavitry, who installed himself first at Ambalavolo and later at Vohibalotra. Part of the Vohitrosy gens was hostile to him and he conquered it, bringing the whole gens under his rule. The establishment of Zaframbo kings put an end to war, for no chief of the Vahoaka [original inhabitants] would dare to attack a gens governed by a Zaframbo. If he did, all the Zaframbo of Sandrananta would be against him. The Zaframbo kings married Vahoaka women and the two groups soon became a single family. It is for this reason that we now have Zaframbo and Vahoaka living in the same villages."

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Under the Tanala system social class and gentile affiliation were inseparable. When a gens succeeded in dominating other gentes and making them recognize the control of its chief, or of chiefs of its blood, all members of the gens assumed noble rank. The bulk of the "nobles" would continue to live in their own territory and while their new status brought social prestige its economic value was almost nil. Their main duty in the state was to act as a police force, keeping peace among the subject gentes and protecting them from outside aggression. Among the Tanala the whole institution of nobility was relatively new and I could learn of no case in which a noble gens had lost its domination. Among neighboring tribes, who had essentially the same system, a noble gens which had been conquered was not degraded to the common level. Such gentes formed a class intermediate between nobles and commoners and retained a certain social prestige. They were distinguished by a class name and might have

565 special rights, as that of killing cattle for the commoners, but they
618 were rigidly excluded from any part in the government.

REGULATION OF MARRIAGE

582 Courtship, the ceremony of marriage, ceremonies used for lifting the ban on certain degrees of relationship, etc., have been described in the section, Life Cycle of the Individual. Only the social control of marriage will be treated here. The only bar to marriage among the Tanala is relationship in certain degrees, but there are opinions as to the desirability of certain types of union which, although not formulated as prohibitions, do much to influence individual choice. Marriages between the members of different generations, or between persons with a marked disparity in age, are usually looked upon with disfavor and are infrequent. Marriages within the lineage are considered undesirable and are very rare. The Menabe were formerly strongly in favor of marriage within the village, but there has been a change in their attitude within the last fifty years. They now favor marriage outside the village, saying that such marriages give the young people a greater range of choice and are more permanent. The Ikongo have always favored marriage outside the village, perhaps [618] because of their greater fear of incest. Marriages within the gens are considered highly desirable by both groups and were normal in ancient times. Since the French domination has put an end to wars, inter-gens marriages have increased considerably.

572 Relationships controlling marriage are based on actual blood
582 relationship, on relationship through marriage, and on relationship established by the *wisasaspa* ("blood brotherhood") ceremony. In [595] polygynous families the children stand in the same relation to the relatives of their father's plural wives as to those of their own mother. If a widow with children remarries, the children stand in the same relation to the new husband's family as to that of their actual father. Relationship based on marriage is as binding as blood relationship in regulating marriages. The children of persons who have performed the *wisasaspa* stand in the same relation to each other as the children of actual brothers, sisters, or brother and sister, but, as a control on marriage, this relationship is usually allowed to lapse in the second or third generation.

582 The Ikongo forbid marriage between parent and child, brother and sister, uncle and niece, aunt and nephew, and between the children of two brothers, two sisters or brother and sister. These prohibitions are more extensive than is usually the case in Madagascar and

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23 the invaders lived in compact gentile groups, but in time certain families or lineages left the gens territory and settled among the aborigines, seizing control. These small ruling groups kept touch with their parent gens for a time and relied on it for support, but they intermarried with their subjects and fused with them racially and culturally. Their descendants in the male line came to constitute a noble caste with representatives in all the groups. Although these nobles claimed a common origin and were jealous of their social privileges they no longer considered themselves as a political unit. Although they would assist each other if the commoners rose against them, they frequently fought among themselves, leading their followers of aboriginal stock against each other. Even in such wars they still recognized the blood bond to the extent that it was taboo for a commoner to kill the enemy king, although a noble would do so without hesitation (see Warfare).

621 Apparently there were many Ikongo villages which did not include lineages of *Aosa* ("noble") caste. Even when they were present their influence was not preponderant in local affairs. The village government was essentially the same as the Menabe. There was an elected chief, usually not a noble, who acted as executive, and a *Fobonolo* ("council"). Each gens had a chief called the *Mponaka* who was elected from the members of the *Aosa* caste. Prerequisites for the office were the same as for the Menabe *Anakondriana*. The *Mponaka* was chosen by the village chiefs and *Notoles* of the entire gens, irrespective of caste, and could be deposed at will. Associated with him were one or more officials called *Anakondriana*, who were elected on the same basis and in the same way as the *Mponaka*, but must be of *saheka* ("common") caste. Theoretically the *Anakondriana* acted as counselors and executives, but actually they often seem to have had as much power as the *Mponaka*, who was unable to remove them from office. The whole arrangement strongly suggested a dual chieftainship.

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[649] Kingdoms arose, as among the Menabe, through one gens acquiring domination over others. The king, also called *Mponaka*, was chosen from among the *Aosa* of the dominant group. Like 648 the gens chiefs, he was assisted by elected *Anakondriana* whom he could not dismiss. These *Anakondriana* might be chosen from any gens within the kingdom, but were always of *saheka* caste. Usually 646 all gentes were represented among them and they formed a sort of permanent council with a sharp check on the conduct of the *Mponaka*. They exercised executive functions and continued in office